



Transportation

December 2015 Newsletter

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Division 8

COUNTIES SERVED | Chatham, Hoke, Lee,  
Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond,  
Scotland

## NCDOT Wants to Help You Save Time, Money Over Holidays



As families travel over the river and through the woods for celebrations, the N.C. Department of Transportation will suspend most road construction activities on major routes across the state to help make their trips a little smoother. By avoiding traffic delays, motorists can reach their destinations safely and efficiently, while cutting down on fuel consumption and costs. The list of closures will be available closer to the holidays on [our website](#).

For real-time travel information at any time, visit the [Travel section](#) of the NCDOT website or follow NCDOT on [Twitter](#).

Here are some additional tips for navigating the highways safely during the holiday travel season:

- Leave early to get a head start on your drive. Travel at non-peak hours when possible.
- Stay alert. Even if work is suspended, you may encounter narrowed lanes and traffic shifts in work zones.
- Be patient and obey the posted speed limit.
- Use alternate routes, when possible, to avoid traffic congestion.

## Stay Connected



N.C. Transportation  
Now

On the latest N.C. Transportation now, the department shares safety tips for drone use, DMV offices across the state get upgrades for next generation driver licenses, and NCDOT wants to hear what your favorite trails are around the state.

[Watch this week's N.C. Transportation Now](#)

- Stay informed. Real-time travel information is available online and over the phone by dialing 511.
- Don't drive drowsy. Travel at times when you are normally awake, and take frequent breaks.
- Avoid distracted driving. When drivers stop focusing on the road ahead, they react more slowly to traffic conditions and are more likely to be involved in an accident.

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## **Jones Named Division Engineer for NCDOT's Division Eight**

Brandon Jones was named the N.C. Department of Transportation's newest division engineer last month. Jones will lead NCDOT's Division Eight, which includes Chatham, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond and Scotland counties.



Brandon Jones is NCDOT's newest Division

Engineer. "We are delighted to name Brandon Division Eight's new division engineer," said NCDOT Chief Engineer Mike Holder. "After working closely with Brandon for years, I've seen him in action and witnessed his ability to manage large projects, engage with the community and see projects through."

Jones has worked for NCDOT for 19 years. Within the department, he has served as division operations engineer, division maintenance engineer and deputy division engineer for Durham, Franklin, Granville, Person, Wake, Warren and Vance counties.

Jones holds a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from N.C. State University.

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## **Local Transportation Projects Accelerated and Added With New State Budget**

Governor Pat McCrory recently announced that many transportation projects across the state will see construction dates moved up thanks to the signed 2015 state budget.

In Moore County, this means the widening of N.C. 211 from Holly Grove School Road to N.C. 73 in West End will be accelerated two years, with construction moving up to 2020. Members of the North Carolina Board of Transportation today received the amended project schedules for their review and are expected to approve them in January 2016.

"The reforms I signed into law will get these roads built sooner," Governor McCrory said. "The primary purpose of the reforms was to ensure transportation funds were being spent on transportation projects and not diverted to other state programs."

Construction of other local projects also will be accelerated or newly funded, because of the budget. These projects will increase local mobility and connectivity and include:

- Upgrading the U.S. 74/Future I-74 corridor from Hamlet to Laurinburg in Richmond and Scotland counties;
- In Hoke and Scotland counties, widening of U.S. 401 Business north of Laurinburg to U.S. 401 Business northeast of Raeford to a multi-lane road;
- In Moore County, N.C. 24/N.C. 27 widening from the courthouse west of N.C. 22 (McNeil Street) to U.S. 15/501 in Carthage to three lanes with pedestrian access;
- In Hoke County, constructing a multi-lane area on a new location on Gillis Hill Road Extension from Rockfish Road to Lindsay Road, which will tie into the intersection of Rockfish Road and School Drive;
- In Hoke and Cumberland counties, widening Gillis Hill Road from U.S. 401 (Raeford Road) to Lindsay Road; and
- In Randolph and Guilford counties, widening Surrett Drive from Eden Terrace to West Market Center Drive in High Point to a multi-lane road.

"These local projects will absolutely work to provide congestion relief and increase safety throughout the division," said Division Eight Board member Pat Molamphy. "I'm happy to see these reforms of the 2015-17 budget that Governor McCrory signed into law, especially the N.C. 211 project accelerated with an anticipated completion date before the U.S. Open in 2024."

The state budget included an additional \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years for transportation funding. They did so through the elimination of the transfer from the Highway Fund to the General Fund and through other fee and rate changes. The additional money allows N.C. Transportation to add or accelerate a total of 248 construction projects across the state.

Ninety-two new segments of highway projects can now be funded in the recently approved 2016-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the department's 10-year

construction plan. Additionally, the construction schedules of another 90 highway projects already approved in the STIP are being accelerated. An additional 66 non-highway projects are also being added to or accelerated in the program.

The department followed the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law to identify new projects (either segments or entire projects) at the statewide, regional and division levels. The projects were identified from those previously scored based on the same weights and criteria (data) used to develop the 2016-2025 STIP.

Local, Division Eight projects also being accelerated and additional projects can be found [here](#).

## NCDOT Offers Tips for Drone Safety



**This holiday season, one of the most popular gifts could literally fly off the shelves.**

Whether they're called quadcopters, radio controlled planes, or any of the high-tech brand names, drones are expected to be big sellers this year, with some estimating as many as 700,000 will make their way into Americans' homes by the end of December.

All of these devices fall under the category of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). UAS technology is an exciting and evolving field, which can lead to confusion for both UAS owners and the general public. The N.C. Department of Transportation is offering tips to help UAS owners enjoy their new technology while protecting citizens' safety and privacy.

"We're proud of North Carolina's legacy of being first in manned flight," said NCDOT Secretary Nick Tennyson. "The academic and industry researchers in our state will make us a leader in unmanned flight as well."

NCDOT's Division of Aviation has established guidelines for UAS operation in North Carolina. Both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the NCDOT Division of Aviation classify UAS flight operations by three categories:

- Recreational - Any UAS flight that is conducted solely for the purpose of recreation.
- Government - Any UAS flight conducted by a government entity to support their work.
- Commercial - Any UAS flight that serves a business purpose or provides a business benefit, even if that benefit is indirect.

Government and commercial UAS operators must adhere to state and federal requirements established by the North Carolina General Assembly and the FAA. Each classification is subject to specific regulations and guidelines.

Many of the UAS owners who receive a drone during this holiday season will use them for purely recreational purposes. While recreational UAS flights are not heavily regulated, the FAA and model aircraft enthusiast groups have established a number of guidelines which should be followed to ensure a fun and safe experience:

- Always fly below an altitude of 400 feet and fly within your direct line of sight.
- Do not fly within 5 miles of an airport, near stadiums or other public events, or for compensation.
- Do not fly UAS that weigh more than 55 pounds.
- Do not fly at night, even if your UAS is equipped with lights.

"UAS technology is fun and exciting, but it needs to be used responsibly," said Division of Aviation Director Bobby Walston. "These guidelines will help ensure the safety of people in the air and on the ground."

UAS operators, whether recreational, government or commercial, should keep in mind that North Carolina has laws governing drone use. UAS users are subject to all North Carolina laws, even if UAS technology is not specifically mentioned. Current and potential drone owners can find more information about state and federal UAS regulations on the Division of Aviation's website.

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